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ON THE  
ROMANISH LANGUAGES OF SWITZERLAND  
AND THE TYROL.

By DR. WILLIAM FREUND.

Read 9th June 1852.

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THE great historical struggle in which the modern Germanic and the ancient Roman spirit have been engaged for centuries beneath the ruins of the old Roman empire, and which has affected politics, laws, morals, and literature alike, is nearly concluded in its general and more prominent features. Neither of these two intellectual tendencies has been absolutely victorious, or entirely conquered. Far up in the north the Roman spirit has impregnated the Germanic race; down in the south the German spirit has penetrated through the manners of the nations of Roman origin, to the great advancement of civilization, which rests on its securest and firmest basis in this intimate connection of the old classic and the Germanic spirit.

But as between neighbouring nations engaged in violent hostilities with each other, peace is with most difficulty and most tardily restored on the boundaries: this intellectual war between Romanism and Germanism, especially as regards the *languages* of the two races, continues down to the present time on the field where the two elements come in contact with each other—in the ancient *Raetia*, the modern *Grisons*, and the *Tyrol*. And it is of great interest to the historian and the ethnographer, as well as to the inquiring philologist, to watch the course of this struggle, which, though apparently noiseless, is not the less serious and passionate.

When, on a journey through Switzerland, we advance on the road which leads to the sources of the Rhine, from *Chur*, the chief town of the Grisons, to the village of the *Ems*, *i. e.* as far as from St. Paul's to Westminster Abbey, we are startled to hear, instead of the purest and correctest German we have just left, a popular language which is neither German, nor

Italian, nor French. The '*Bunn gi Signur*,' or '*Bunna sera Signur*,' with which they greet us, may be explained as bad Italian for '*Buon di*,' or '*Buona sera Signor*.' The comprehension of '*Lur Cumpagnia mi ven ad esser lagreiola*,' for 'Your company is very agreeable to me,' is more difficult; but the answer to our question for the right way: '*Els san buc ir anèrr*' (You can't mistake it), or the exclamation, '*Fou als gavish ün vantireivel viadi*' (I wish you a pleasant journey), will be quite incomprehensible. We go a little way further from the village of *Ems*, and hear good German again in the lovely *Reichenau*, famed by the fact that Louis Philippe taught here during his exile in 1793; but in the next village, *Bonaduz*, we have the unintelligible language again. We travel on: in the next village, *Rhoetzunz*, German is spoken; in the following one, *Kätzis*, the strange idiom prevails, and so it goes on along the whole route, as far as the *Splügen*, and the sources of the *Lower Rhine*, where both languages suddenly cease, and the Italian commences its dominion over the south.

If we travel eastward, from Chur to the *Fulier Pass* and the *Engadine*, we lose the German language entirely a few miles beyond Chur, near the village of Lenz. The strange popular idiom prevails uninterruptedly to the sources of the Inn, and then continues, slightly modified, but much more unintelligible, towards the east, through the long valley of the Inn to the boundaries of the Tyrol, where it is superseded by the German, but appears in a slightly changed form in single dispersed villages.

We cannot be surprised that the traveller, revelling in the varied and overwhelming impressions produced by the natural scenery, and charmed by the enchanting pictures of the Tyrol and Switzerland, should feel no inclination and find no leisure for philological or grammatical researches; and, on the other hand, it is just as natural that the simple inhabitants of those mountain villages, in their complete isolation from the intellectual life of the inhabitants of the valley, and knowing little more of literature than the Bible and hymn-book, can give no satisfactory explanation of the genius of their language. Hence it comes that we know far less of this highly interesting branch of the great Roman original tongue than of the language of

the Sandwich Islands or the Gipsies; that the greatest living professor of the Romanish languages, Dr. *Diez*, in Bonn, has completely slighted the value of this language; and that the most philological of all the nations of the world—the Germans—in their language esteem *Churwälsch* (the language of Chur or the Grisons) and *Kauderwelsch* (or gibberish, cant, jargon) to be synonymous terms.

The oldest information which we possess of the language of the inhabitants of the Grisons dates from the year 1664, being an account of a journey made through part of the low countries, Germany, Italy, and France, by *Philip Skippon*, Esq., and is copied in the sixth volume of *J. Churchill's* "Collection of Voyages and Travels," London, 1732, folio pp. 695—699. The traveller speaks as follows of this curious idiom:—

"Here [in the Engadine] all the inhabitants speak an odd language called *Romauntsh* (which is also spoken by the other Grisons), compounded of *high Dutch, Italian, Spanish, French*, and *their own idiom*: they have several dialects of it, and those in the lower speak differently from those in the upper Engadine. The New Testament and Psalms are printed in this language, which the ministers preach in."

The writer then gives the Lord's Prayer in two dialects, and adds, finally, a list of some hundred words, which, on account of the unscientific and inaccurate mode of writing them is of no value for linguistic purposes.

The next, and a more explicit account of the language of the Grisons in the year 1776, we owe to a native of that country, a member of the highly-respected ancient patrician family of *Planta*. The pamphlet is entitled, "An Account of the Romanish Language, by Joseph Planta, F.R.S., in a letter to Sir John Pringle, Bart., P.R.S.," and is reprinted from the *Phil. Trans.* 1776: vol. LXVI. part I. pp. 129—159. A German translation of this paper appeared simultaneously at Chur, under the title "*Geschichte der Romanischen Sprache, von F. Planta*." This essay has a particular interest, because it expresses the same views on the origin of the language which are still cherished with great national pride by many of the inhabitants, namely, that the present

idiom is the almost unchanged ancient language of the *Etrurians*, which they introduced into that region on their immigration from Italy in the fifth century B.C., and that this mountain dialect is therefore older and more original than all the other languages of southern Europe.

As this little pamphlet afforded no material for individual investigation and individual judgment, and as it was known to but very few, the learned world remained in complete ignorance of the language of the Grisons for nearly half a century, and this ignorance was not at all diminished by what Adelung said, in the beginning of this century, in "Mithridates," on the occasion of giving the Lord's Prayer in that idiom, on account of the inaccuracy and inconsistency of his assertions.

At last, in the year 1820, *Math. Conradi*, Protestant pastor at *Andeer*, a little village on the road from Chur to the Lower Rhine, published the first, and hitherto the only *German-Romanish Grammar*, which was succeeded in 1823 by a little *Romanish-German*, and in 1828, as a second part, by a *German-Romanish Dictionary*.

These three works have hitherto been considered as the chief sources for a knowledge of the language of the Grisons, and the matter they afford has been used with conscientious and scientific care by the German philologists, *Diefenbach* ("On the present Romanish written Languages," Leipz. 1831, 4to.); *Diez* ("Grammar of the Romanish Languages," Bonn, 1836—1844, 3 vols. 8vo.); and by *Fuchs* ("On the so-called Irregular Verbs in the Romanish Languages," Berlin, 1840, 8vo., and "The Romanish Languages in their relation to the Latin," Halle, 1849, 8vo.) As the result of their investigations it has been discovered that the language of the Grisons is by no means the ancient Etruscan, but, like the present languages of Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, and Wallachia, a branch of the *Latin tongue*. The abovenamed professors only differ in the degree of the relationship, as *Diefenbach* and *Fuchs* consider the language of the Grisons, or the *Rätoromanish*, as a *daughter* of the Latin, while *Diez* esteems it the *granddaughter* or *relative one degree removed*.

However meritorious and praiseworthy the works of *Conradi* are, they still reveal, when the subject is investigated in a

profoundly historical manner, besides other imperfections, a *partiality* which has naturally biassed the descriptions of the abovenamed scholars, which are founded on these works. The honest pastor of Andeer has treated the language prevalent in his immediate neighbourhood, that is, in the *Grey League*, grammatically and lexicographically, and only added to that, by way of appendix and without any further explanation, four little insignificant tales in the idiom of *Engadine*. But both geography and history direct the philologist with equally forcible reasons to the heights of the southern half of the Grisons, where the isolated population could keep the remnants of the Roman language much more free from Teutonic influences than the inhabitants of the northern portion, where the German tongue has encroached with giant strides for centuries, and has completely supplanted the former language in whole valleys. And it is equally opposed to the laws of historical criticism to found linguistic explanations on such *modern* forms as those of 1820, and not rather to go back to the forms of former centuries, which more nearly resemble the original ones.

These two latter considerations have induced me, in my researches on the Romanish of the ancient Rätia, to extend the material afforded by Conradi, and to search for the higher and more ancient linguistic forms.

The investigations which I have prosecuted latterly on this subject have fortunately introduced me to the works, as yet partly unpublished, of a native professor of the Rätoromanish—of Professor *Carisch* of Chur—by means of which, together with epistolary communications from the same scholar, I hope to have found a firm footing on this field of philological inquiries.

Permit me, Sir, to enumerate to this honourable Society the chief results of the inquiries I have hitherto made, which I, under existing circumstances, can of course only consider as the first foundation for more profound research.

Of the three territorial divisions into which the former Roman province *Raetia* is at present divided, only the smaller portion, situated beyond the Alps, and belonging to Lombardy, has exclusively preserved the Roman element.

In the province of *Tyrol* the German element has long reigned; the inhabitants only speak Romanish, and that strongly impregnated with German, in the isolated villages of the western division, in the *Gröden valley*, in *Enneberg*, in the abbey *Beutchestein*, in the recesses of *Pusterthal*, in *Fodomi*, and in *Tauserthal*. Between these two elements lies the north-western portion of the former Raetia, the canton of the *Grisons*. Of the 90,000 souls composing its population at the present time, about 50,000 speak *Romanish*, viz. about 8000 in *Lower Engadine* (from *Martinsbruck* to *Brail*), 3000 in *Upper Engadine* (from *Brail* to *Sils*), 32,000 in *Oberland*, and about 7000 in the other villages between *Oberland* and *Engadine*. As the mountainous district of the Grisons is cleft into an innumerable quantity of divided valleys and villages, this circumstance must, at an early period, have divided the old Romanish tongue into a number of different idioms; and, added to this, the uncertain orthography which yet exists, so to say, in a state of nature, has subjected the most simple Latin word to a long chain of modifications which sometimes completely disguises the original form. Professor Carisch adduces the word *bucca* “not,” as an example of this fact. Of this word there may be found no less than *forty-one different forms* in the northern half alone of the Romanish districts. They are—

*bucca, bucc; buca, buc; bucha, buch; bocca, boc; bocha, boch; buoca, buoc; bouca, bouc; buitga, buig; boitgia, boitg, botg; puca, puc; ucca, uc; uca, uc; beca, bec; eccca, ecc; echa, ech; hecca, hecc; hecha, hech; bega, beg; beigia, beig; betgia, betg.*

If it be borne in mind that the southern portion of the Grisons has also a great number of independent forms of the same word, compounded sometimes with the vowel *i*, as, *bichia, bitg, bich*, &c.; sometimes by the introduction of an *r*, as, *brichia*, &c.; and that in conversational language the latter half of the word is made use of alone, *i. e.* “*ca*” for “not,” as in “*sas ca pli?*” “do you not know any more?” we may picture to ourselves the multiplicity of forms of the Rätoromanish idioms. Not being confined within the bonds of imperious grammatical or orthographical systems, they can

follow their natural genius, like the Swiss soil, which, without the assistance of art, produces the most varied vegetation merely in consequence of its infinite varieties of geographical situation.

In this diversity of idioms, the river domain of the *Inn* and of the *Rhine* form two distinct groups of languages, under one of which most of the other neighbouring idioms of the Grisons may be classed as further variations, according to their vicinity to one or the other. Only the idiom of the lovely valley of *Oberhalbstein*, situated in the centre of the Grisons, on the road from Chur to the *Julier Pass*, may, to a certain extent, be considered as an independent idiom; and the scattered elements of the Romanish language in Tyrol may also be considered as a separate group, as it deviates considerably from the chief idioms of the Grisons already enumerated.

Surveying this little space on which such numerous idioms prevail, many of them not extending beyond a mile, we are surprised by the fact that the same dispute about precedence, the same overvaluing of their own and undervaluing of other idioms which frequently exists between more important nations, is here repeated in miniature. Professor Carisch says, in the preface to his *Pocket Dictionary of the Raetoromanish Language* (Chur, 1848, p. iv.)—

“ Gladly as the author of this work acknowledges a difference between the better and inferior among our dialects in general, he has hitherto not been able to arrive at a satisfactory conviction of the unconditional priority of one before all other Rätoromanish dialects. And from the contradictory views which are advanced on all sides, it may be presumed that the people themselves have not yet formed a conclusive opinion on the subject. It is undeniable, that however exultingly many an Engadinian may look down upon the Romanish on this side of the hills, or, as he generally contemptuously calls it, the ‘*Shalauer*,’ the Oberlanders still shew little inclination to grant this pretended superiority unconditionally to the Engadine tongue. And again, in the simple valleys beyond and on this side of the mountains, between nearer and more distant



districts, between Upper Engadinians and Lower Engadinians, the inhabitants of *Disentis* and *Gruben*, of *Schams* and *Heinzenberg*, of *Domleschg* and *Oberhalbstein*, there is everywhere the same combat and the same firm conviction, and at every discussion the boldest assertions, that the best, the most beautiful, the most euphonious, and the sweetest Romanish is undeniably—*their own*. In this unsatisfactory condition the settlement of the question stands at present, and it may be long before a competent decision can be arrived at."

We may add that the position of this quarrel is still more unsatisfactory, when we consider the ever-growing danger that all these idioms will be swallowed up by the German language within a few generations, and the unjustifiable carelessness which leads many districts now to fill the pulpit and desk with men who understand only German and not a word of Romanish, and who thus are themselves advancing the gradual extinction of their language.

Another cause for the gradual subjection of these mountain idioms to the German language is the want of a literature in its real sense. The tender flower of poetry cannot flourish here, under the frigidity of eternal snow, where, according to a native proverb, it is "nine months winter and three months cold." ("*Nus hasain nov meins unviern a treis meins freid*"), or, as the Italian expresses it—

"Engadina, terra fina,  
Se non fossi la pruina."

Nor can the tree of knowledge find space to extend its roots here. Only *religion*, which finds a soil for its blessed fertility, wherever human hearts beat—religion only has created a small but meritorious literature here. The first book which was published here a century after the discovery of printing, in 1551, was the translation of the Catechism, by *Jachiem Bifrun* or *Bivrone*, of Samaden, in Upper Engadine. Nine years subsequently (1560), he, at his own expense, published a translation into the Upper Engadine tongue of the New Testament. Forty-one years later (1601) a translation of the Catechism was published in the Romanish dialect of the Oberland, which was followed in 1606 by a translation of the

Psalms for the use of churches in Lower Engadine, by the reformer, Dr. *Ulrich Cambell*. In 1648 a New Testament in the Romanish of the Oberland, by pastor *Luci Gabriel*, appeared, and was followed, in 1679, by the entire Bible in the Lower Engadine dialect; and, in 1718, the same, in the idiom of Upper Engadine. In the present century, partly by the assistance of the British and Foreign Bible Society (regarding which the sixth and ninth report will give further explanation), the New Testament has been printed in the dialect of the Lower Engadine and Oberland, and many thousand copies distributed among the inhabitants.

In consequence of the improvement in educational establishments made by both Protestants and Catholics, much trouble has latterly been bestowed on the composition of good schoolbooks in the three chief dialects (viz. of Upper and Lower Engadine, and the Oberland); and it is chiefly these patriotically disposed teachers who are endeavouring to oppose the advance of the German elements.

The attempt has even been frequently made within the last fifteen years to edit political papers in the Romanish of Engadine and Oberland, but many of them ceased again after a very short existence. At present two such newspapers appear in the Oberland dialect—“*Amitg d'igl pievel*” (the People's Friend), and “*Il Romansch*.” Of the latter, which is a weekly paper, containing four pages in small folio, the first eighteen numbers of this year, down to the 29th April, have been sent to me; and it is of peculiar interest to see how, under the head “*Exteriur*” (foreign affairs), the great and small events of the world beyond the mountains are treated with political liberality, and brought within the comprehension of these simple mountaineers. It is curious to read how, from “*Engeltiaria*” (England), the great banquet of the Lord Mayor, and the declarations of Lord Derby, are communicated, and the highly remarkable meeting of the Deaf and Dumb Society; or from “*Fronscha*” (France), the “*cuolp statistic*” (coup d'etat) of Louis Napoleon; or from “*Spaynia*” and “*Portugal*,” that they are bankrupt (“*fan bancrutt*.”) But the Home Department also offers many facts of great interest, which charm increases by being expressed in the naïve uncultivated idiomatic

tongue. One curious report especially, from St. Gallen, is so characteristic in form and contents, that it is worth the trouble to copy it here in the original, with the verbal translation. The subject is, the lines of telegraph which are now being laid down through Switzerland, and for which subscriptions have been made in the cantons separately. A telegraph office is to be erected in the village of *Altstaedten*, in St. Gallen. A meeting convened for the purpose has, by a large majority, voted the expenses, which will amount annually to 50 francs (about 2*l.*) for the house, and 200 francs (8*l.*) for the expenses. After this calculation, which is an interesting evidence of the scale of monetary relations there, the reporter continues—

“Ina minoritad vulera accordar tuttavìa nuot per telegrafs, essent dil meini: quei che jeu enconuschel buc, magliel jeu buc; giè in oratur, il qual en mintgia redunonza da vischneunca plaida *igl emprim* e cun sia aulta, sonorira vusch se fa udir per tutt la baselgia, teneva il telegraf per in *um*, aschia ina sort de quels, che fan da cuorrer, 500 els se produceschen tschen e leu sen las vischneum cas, e vuleva per quei nuot saver da quei ‘*pac de comediants*’; quei che quels empermettien, seigi per ordinari cugliunerias, et aschia seigi ci era tuttavìa nunpusseivel, che quei ‘*Signur Telegraf*’ sappi cuorrer aschi dabot sco il cametg et en aschi cuort tems ir a Constantinopel e sappi Dieus nua. Il vischinadi duei buc se schar cugliunar da quei ‘*engonnadar*,’ ei cuosli eung avunda, et in hagi autras spesas pli necessarias, che da procurar locals per tala lumperaglia; quels dueigien luvrar e gudogniar lur peun sin undrevla moda, &c.”

Which means—

“A minority refused to grant any thing for telegraphs, being of opinion, ‘What I don’t know I will not have (eat):’ nay, one orator, who always plays the most prominent part in every meeting of the village, and whose loud sonorous voice is plainly heard through the whole church (the place of meeting), considered the telegraph to be a *man*—one of that kind who

race fast, as they are met with now and then in the villages, and wanted, therefore, to have nothing to do with such a *pack of strolling players*; that whatever they promised was generally deception; and it was indeed quite impossible that this *Mr. Telegraph* should be able to run as quickly as lightning, and in as short a time, to Constantinople, or God knows whither. He advised the community not to be cheated by this *deceiver*. Besides, the outlay was exorbitant, and they had more necessary expenses than to find houses for such *vagabonds*; they ought to work and earn their bread honestly, &c."

If we now consider the Romanish language in Switzerland and Tyrol, how it has been modified in the course of centuries to its present condition, the solution of the first and most important question, namely, as to its origin and its relation to the other European languages, can present no difficulties. Considered lexicographically or grammatically, it is evident that the Romanish of the ancient *Raetia* is the immediate continuation of the former popular language of the Romans, the so-called *Lingua Romana rustica* or *vulgaris*, which, from the peculiar local position, and the low intellectual standard of the inhabitants—soldiers, shepherds, and hunters, form the majority—has formed itself somewhat rudely and wildly in sound and writing, but which has remained faithful to its origin in the essential laws of the language. It has, at the same time, like its Roman progenitor, maintained cultivating power enough in itself, that it can, when requisite, appropriate foreign names of objects, and generally subjects them to a more or less violent modification to render them conformable to its own genius.

After reviewing and calculating the at present existing words of this language in its two chief dialects, and including all the usual deviations of words, the Romanish of the Engadine contains about 8000, that of the Oberland about 12,000 words. If we divide each of these two lists of words into ten parts, the *Engadine Romanish* contains eight-tenths Roman, one-tenth German, and one-tenth etymologically doubtful or unknown parts; but the *Oberland Romanish* contains six-tenths Roman, three-tenths German, and one-tenth etymologically doubtful or entire unknown words.

The especial examination of each of these parts affords a profusion of interesting revelations to discuss, which would of course require a comprehensive work on the subject. I shall give only a few prominent facts.

The first word already in the Romanish translation of the New Testament is of especial interest to the philologist. "The Book of the generation of Jesus Christ" is translated in the Lower Engadine—"Cudesch dalla generatiun da Jesu Christo; in the Oberland Romanish"—"*Teg cudisch da la naschienscha da Jesu Christ.*" The *cudesch* of the one and the *cudisch* of the other, which every one will recognise as the Latin *codex*, is the only name for "book" in all the dialects of the Raetoromanish, while the Latin *liber* is quite discarded. It is interesting now to find that the *Wallachian* or *Dakoromanish*, which, from its isolated and independent process of development affords many points of resemblance with the Raetoromanish, has also lost the Latin *liber*, and substituted in its stead *karte* (Lat. *charta*). This phenomena, as is well known, is by no means an isolated fact in the Romanish languages, and arises from the great diversity of the *Lingua Latina*, or cultivated written language, and the *Lingua Romana* as the popular language of the Romans. Thus the classic Latin *equus* "horse," has been superseded by the vulgar *caballus*, literally, "a jade," "a nag;" Spanish, *caballo*; Ital. and Portug. *cavallo*; French *cheval*; and in the different Raetoromanish dialects, *chaval*, *cavaigl*, *chavail*, and *tgivail*; Wallach. *kal*. In the same manner the classic Latin, *os*, *oris* "mouth," has given way to the vulgar *bucca*, literally, "cheeks;" Ital. *bocca*; Span. *boca*; Portug. *bocca* and *boca*; French *bouche*: Raetorom., either according to the oldest form *buoca*, or also *bocc* and *buccha*. Nor do the Raetoromanish languages possess the classic Latin *ignis* "fire," but only the stronger *focus*, literally, "fireplace," "hearth;" Ital. *fucco*, Span. *fuego*, Portug. *fogo*, French *feu*; the Raetorom. is *feug*, *fieur* or *fo*, and the Wallach. *fók*.

The Raetoromanish affords also some examples quite peculiar to itself of this characteristic feature of the Romanish languages. The "word" is not called after the Latin *verbum* in the present Raetoromanish dialects, but—and this is the case

in no other Romanish language, *pled*, or *plaid*. For "In the beginning was the word," stands, in the Lower Engadine translation—" *In il principi eira il pled*," and in the Oberland translation—" *Enten l'antschetta fov' ilg plaid*." Here the specially judicial expression *placitum* has taken the place of the common *verbum*, as in the more cultivated Romanish languages the Greek, as it were, more aristocratic *parabla*, *paravla*, *parola*, and *parole* (Greek παραβολή, "an illustration"), while the Wallachians have kept the Latin *verbum*, and modified it into *vorbë*. It now deserves an especial notice, that in the Upper Engadine translation of the New Testament of the year 1560 "word" is rendered "*vierf*," and in the plural even more like the original form *verba*. If we remember now, that in the oldest Latin, when the popular and the written language were yet the same, *mius* was also said instead of *meus*, (whence the Latin vocative *mi*, the Ital. pronoun possessive *mio*, and Spanish *mi*,) we have the surprising fact, that between the ice plains of the Swiss mountains, where we anticipate the most confused mixture of language the expression *la mia verva*, "my words," has preserved the original Latin *illa mia verba* in sound and form much better than any other spot on the great Roman territory.

Like *cudesch* or *cudisch* for *liber*, and *pled* or *plaid* for *verbum*, it is peculiar to the Raetoromanish language to render "red" by *cotschen* (Latin *coccinus*, literally, "purple"); "yellow" by *mellen*, (*i.e.*) *mellinus*, literally "honey-coloured"; "mountain" by *culm*, (*i.e.*) *culmen*, "a point"; and, what deserves particular notice, "man" by *crastian*, or *carstiaun*, (*i.e.*) *Christianus*, "Christian." The English language, indeed, sometimes employs "Christian" and "man" as synonymous terms; but it seems a strange and peculiar anachronism when the Raetoroman gospel makes Christ himself express the warning: "Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh," in the words: "*Vae à quel crastian tras il qual scandal vain*" (Matth. xviii. 7); or when the "Son of Man" is constantly rendered by "*Il filg dal crastian*."

The Raetoromish has preserved many peculiarities of the Roman mother tongue more firmly than the other sister languages, grammatically as well as lexicographically. We have

seen that the neutral form of the plural has been preserved in *la verva* from *il vierf* "the word." The Raetoromanish possesses a great number of such old neutral forms, as isolated remains of the *genus neutrum* of substantives, which it has, as a rule, given up, in common with the other Romanish languages. Thus, the Raetoromanish *il member*, "the limb," Lat. *membrum*, is in the plur. *la membra* : thus, *ilg bratsch*, "the arm," Lat. *brachium*, plur. *la bratscha*, *ilg iess*, "the bone," Lat. *os, ossis*, plur. *l'ossa* ; *il chiern* or *corn*, "the horn," Lat. *cornu*, and, in the farming idiom of Varro also *cornum*, plur. *la corna*, &c.

A similar indistinct assumption of the existence of a neutral gender is seen in the *adjective*. While an *s* is added to the mascul. adj., when they are placed as a predicate after the verb (*to be* f. ex. "this man is tall and healthy"—*quei hum ei gronds a sauns*), the *s* is omitted in neutral expressions, as "it is good, beautiful," &c. *ei e' bun, bial*, not *buns, bials*, &c.

But one peculiarity of the Raetoromanish deserves especial notice, namely, that the plural of all nouns, excepting of course the above enumerated remnants of a neutral term in *a*, (as *membra, ossa, corna*, &c., is formed like the Spanish, Portuguese, and French, by an *s*, while the Italian and the Provençal, to which the Raetoromanish is locally the nearest, has not this plural *s*.

In this point the Raetoromanish proves itself more Roman than the Latin language itself, which has no nominatives in the plural, as *poetas, mensas, caballis*, &c. But it has not been sufficiently considered hitherto that the *Lingua Romana vulgaris*, possessed such plurals in *s*. The plural forms of the nominative *duomvires* for *duomviri*, *facteis* for *facti*, *leibereis*, for *liberi*, *patrimes* and *matrimes* for *patrimi* and *matrimi*, *Vituries* and *Vituris* for *Vitirii*, *Herennieis* for *Herennii*, &c., are proved by inscriptions and evidences of the grammarians. Added to this is a highly interesting fragment of an *Atellane* (popular farce) of Pomponius, in which even the plural of the feminine of the first declension is not *ae*, but *as* : *Quot laetitias insperatas modo mihi inrepsere in sinum*, "what unhopd for joys have just entered my heart!" If we consider now that the Sardinian dialect, although it belongs to the Italian idioms, adds an *s* in the plural f. i. *'is celus*, "the heavens,"

*is feminas*, “the women”: that the comparison of languages in all the varieties of the Indo-European families establishes the *s* to be the original sign of the plural; that in several Latin glossaries the nominal plural *sententias*, *causas*, *villas*, is found; and that the subsequent popular tongue, especially in France, changed the Latin names of people from *i* into *s*, and made them names of towns (whence, for example, this metropolis has undergone a change from *Londinium* into *Londres*); this firm and universal use of the plural *s* in the Raetoromanish proves such an intimate connection with the original *Lingua Romana*, and, through it, indirectly with the languages of the Indo-European family springing from the same root, as could here have been least anticipated.

I should esteem myself fortunate if I had succeeded, by what I have explained here, in awaking the interest of those for a language hitherto undeservedly undervalued and neglected, who consider the investigation of languages to be the surest means for ethnological researches, and especially of all those who, in the approaching season for excursions to the Continent, will have the opportunity, surrounded by the wonders of alpine scenery, of hearing and investigating the last venerable sounds of that ancient tongue before it will have succumbed to the fate of all earthly things, and its tones will have died away and become extinct for ever.